

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Monitor and Evaluate (M&E) Reproductive Success and Survival (RSS) in Wenatchee River Project

Project No.: 2003-039-00

Project Manager: Victoria Bohlen, EWU-4

Location: Chelan County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): Appendix B3.3 - Field and laboratory research, inventory, and information collection activities that are directly related to the conservation of fish or wildlife resources and that involve only negligible habitat destruction or population reduction.

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to continue funding the WDFW and NMFS to implement the M&E RSS project in the Wenatchee River. The project is evaluating the relative reproductive success of hatchery and natural spring Chinook salmon using a DNA analysis. Project actions include: (1) operating fish traps, (2) collecting natural-origin spring Chinook potential spawners from the Tumwater Dam fish trap on Wenatchee River between May 15th and July 31st, (3) collecting 2,000 naturally-produced smolt from tandem screw traps at river kilometer 9.6 on the lower Wenatchee River throughout the year, (4) collecting tissue samples by clipping the caudal fin, and collecting biological data by measuring, weighing, and noting sex, ages, and origin of fish, (5) storing tissue samples at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Seattle, and (6) extracting DNA from samples. Additional activities are outlined in the Statement of Work and planned through year 2021.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Brenda Aguirre

Brenda Aguirre
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 21, 2020

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Monitor and Evaluate (M&E) Reproductive Success and Survival (RSS) in Wenatchee River Project, Project No. 2003-039-00

Project Site Description

Project sites are located within the Wenatchee Subbasin. Adult spring Chinook sample collection would occur at the Tumwater Dam adult trap on the Wenatchee River, and smolt collection would occur in the lower portion of the Wenatchee River downstream of Tumwater Dam.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no ground-disturbing activities; thus, the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect historic properties or cultural resources. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no ground-disturbing activities; thus, the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect geology and soils. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing or vegetation removal activities are proposed. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps.		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing or vegetation removal activities are proposed: thus the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect wildlife or wildlife habitat. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps.		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**

(including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)

Explanation: There would be no impact to adjacent waterbodies or floodplains because no ground-disturbing activities are proposed. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps.

Direct and incidental impacts to listed-fish species from proposed activities are annually approved by NMFS and the USFWS. NMFS issued Permit 18121 to WDFW and Chelan County PUD under Section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) authorizing direct take of adult and juvenile, endangered, upper Columbia River (UCR) spring Chinook salmon by monitoring and evaluation activities for years 2015 - 2026. WDFW is the lead entity for the project and reports annual take to NMFS per instruction in the permit. For take of endangered bull trout, WDFW receives authorization for incidental take under their ESA Section 6 Cooperative Agreement with the USFWS by reporting annual take per instructions in the agreement.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: No ground-disturbing activities are proposed; thus, the action does not have the potential to impact wetlands. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No ground-disturbing activities that may affect groundwater or aquifers are proposed. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps.

8. **Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**

Explanation: No activities are proposed that may affect land use or specially-designated areas. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: No activities are proposed that may affect visual quality. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: No activities are proposed that may affect air quality. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps and do not emit fumes.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: No activities are proposed that may affect noise. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps and would not result in an increase in ambient noise at these locations.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at fish traps. Workers carrying out trapping fish and collecting, storing, and extracting DNA are trained in proper techniques and these activities are not considered hazardous nor do they result in any health or safety risks to the general public.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: No notification – All work is at existing facilities or at traps accessed on existing roads on public lands.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Brenda Aguirre
Brenda Aguirre
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: January 21, 2020